



Lake County

Health Department and
Community Health Center

Take Steps to Prevent Norovirus

The Lake County Health Department/Community Health Center is encouraging residents to take steps to prevent norovirus, a group of viruses that cause gastrointestinal illness or “stomach flu.” Norovirus is most common during the winter months. It is highly contagious and can spread easily. Outbreaks occur more often where there are more people in a small area, such as nursing homes, restaurants, catered events, and cruise ships. Good hygiene practices are important to prevent transmission from person to person.

Symptoms usually include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, body aches, headache, tiredness and a low-grade fever. Symptoms typically last 24 to 60 hours and subside on their own.

Noroviruses are found in the stool or vomit of infected people. People can become infected with the virus in several ways, including eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus, touching contaminated surfaces or objects, or having direct contact with another person who is infected. Following are steps that can help you avoid noroviruses:

- Frequently wash your hands, especially after toileting or changing diapers and before eating or preparing food.
- Carefully wash fruits and vegetables, and steam oysters before eating them.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of diarrhea or vomiting by using a bleach-based household cleaner.
- Immediately remove and wash clothing or linens that may be contaminated with the virus after an episode of illness (use hot water and soap).
- Flush or discard any vomit and/or stool in the toilet and make sure that the surrounding area is kept clean.
- Persons who are infected with norovirus should refrain from food preparation while they have symptoms and for three days after they recover from their illness.

The Health Department has taken proactive steps to inform residents about the virus by routinely notifying day-care centers, long-term care facilities, physicians and other health care entities about the illness.